

NEWS ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

December, 20, 2007

Contact: Kirsten Stewart, Communications Manager  
Division of Housing and Community Development  
(801) 538-8718

Claudia Nakano, Communications Director  
Utah Department of Community & Culture  
(801) 538-8805

**Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund Nearly Depleted**

Salt Lake City, Utah – Growing demand for affordable housing has nearly depleted the Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund.

The Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund Board met on Thursday and approved \$7.4 million for the purchase, renovation and construction of 13 low-income housing projects. That leaves the fund with about \$200,000 to invest in projects over the next six months.

“Thursday’s board approved one of the single largest payouts ever, which speaks to the demand,” said board chairwoman, Midvale Mayor JoAnn B. Seghini. “The funding approved today will provide families and individuals with safe, affordable housing. Some of the units are dedicated for people with disabilities, the homeless and working professionals, such as teachers, police and health care workers.”

Combined, the projects will expand Utah’s affordable housing stock by 700 units for rent or purchase by families with earnings averaging below 34 percent of area median income.

The Olene Walker Loan Fund celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. It will be replenished in May and July, at the start of the new federal and state fiscal years.

“In the meantime, we’ll go ahead and approve projects prospectively, pending the availability of future funding,” said Gordon Walker, Director of the Utah Division of Housing and Community Development.

On a positive note, the governor’s proposed budget recommends spending an additional \$1.6 million on the loan fund.

“You would think that with a strong economy, demand for affordable housing would wane, but it’s the opposite,” said the loan fund’s namesake, former Utah Governor Olene Walker. “A strong economy means housing prices and rents go up, making it difficult for even some middle-class families to afford homes.”

Funds were awarded on a competitive basis for the following developments:

\$131,840 to Portree Properties, LLC for the rehabilitation of the historical Newhouse Apartments in **Price** and Golden Rule Mission in **Helper**.

\$691,637 to the Kier Corporation for purchase of an existing, 72-unit rental assistance project, the Countryside Apartments in **Ogden**.

\$606,850 to the Kier Corporation for purchase of the 68-unit Bramblewood Apartments in **Ogden**, a rental assistance project.

\$1.5 million to the Road Home homeless shelter to renovate a vacant hotel in **Salt Lake City** for use as permanent housing for the chronically homeless.

\$925,000 to Western Region Nonprofit Housing Corporation for construction of a 48-unit apartment complex in **Layton**.

\$564,000 to LaPorte Group to renovate Piccardy Apartments in **Salt Lake City** for rent by people with AIDS and developmental disabilities and the homeless.

\$386,600 to LaPorte Group to renovate Peter Pan Apartments in **Salt Lake City**. Some of the units will be set aside for the homeless and people with developmental disabilities.

\$750,000 to Community Development, Inc. to construct Mt. Catherine Gardens, 48 affordable housing apartment unit in **Richfield**.

\$323,312 to Horizon Development for construction of 64 affordable twin-home units in **Logan**.

\$1 million to Western Region Nonprofit Housing Corporation to preserve the Woodside Apartments in **Price**, a rental assistance project.

\$220,000 to Neighborhood Non-profit Housing to expand River Park Senior housing in **Logan**.

\$67,500 to the Salt Lake County Housing Authority to purchase the Transitional Living Center from the Utah Food Bank in **Salt Lake City**.

\$160,000 to the Habitat for Humanity to build four single-family homes in **Summit and Wasatch counties**.

###